

Message Text

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20

ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 SAB-01

SAM-01 IO-10 /066 W

----- 017886

R 070600Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0845

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 2485

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: SA, IS, MARR

SUBJ: SAG CLAIMS ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS OF SAUDI TERRITORY

1. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER MOHAMMED MAS'UD ORALLY PASSED TO DCM APRIL 3 FOLLOWING INFORMATION ON ALLEGED ISRAELI OVERFLIGHTS; SOURCE OF REPORTS WAS COMMANDER OF NORTHERN REGION, AND REPORTS BASED UPON OBSERVATIONS MADE IN VICINITY OF MAQNA (ON THE GULF OF AQABA): (A) ON THURSDAY, MARCH 20 AT 1620 TWO UNIDENTIFIED AIRCRAFT FLEW OVER SAUDI COASTAL AREA FROM SOUTH TO NORTH; WHILE OVER MAQNA THEY BROKE THE SOUND BARRIER; (B) TEN MINUTES LATER SAME DAY ANOTHER AIRCRAFT COMING FROM DIRECTION OF TIRAN PASSED OVER MAQNA, ALSO HEADING NORTH; (C) ON FRIDAY, MARCH 21, AT 1800 HOURS ANOTHER AIRCRAFT PENETRATED SAUDI AIR SPACE OVER PENINSULA SHAYKH HUMAYD (MOUTH OF GULF OF AQABA) AND FLEW ON SOUTH AT A LOW ALTITUDE.

2. COMMENT: (A) IT'S BEEN A YEAR OR MORE SINCE MAS'UD LAST BROUGHT REPORTS IAF INCURSION INTO SAUDI AIR SPACE TO OUR ATTENTION. WITH SUSPENSION OF SECRETARY'S PEACE MISSION, SAUDIS ARE NOW PROBABLY MORE ALERT TO EVENTS ON THEIR QUASI-BORDER WITH ISRAEL. MAS'UD WAS NOT ASKING
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THAT WE TAKE ANY ACTION, BUT MAY SPEAK TO US A LITTLE

MORE URGENTLY IF OVERFLIGHTS CONTINUE. (B) SPEAKING MORE
GENERALLY, THE IAF MAY BECOME MORE INTERESTED IN SAUDI
ARABIA THAN IT HAS IN THE PAST. A NEW 9,000-10,000 FOOT
RUNWAY OPENED AT TABUK IN THE PAST FEW DAYS, AND THE
SAUDIS ARE RUSHING CONSTRUCTION ON BARRACKS AND OTHER
HOUSING SO THAT THE LIGHTNING SQUADRON CAN BE MOVED TO
TABUK IN JUNE OR JULY. (THESE ARE PURELY DEFENSIVE FIGHTER-
INTERCEPTORS WITH NO STRIKE CAPABILITY). WE NOTE ALSO
THAT ISRAELI COF GENERAL GUR WHILE TALKING TO A GROUP
OF U.S. CONGRESSMEN RECENTLY INCLUDED SAUDI ARABIA TO-
GETHER WITH EGYPT AND SYRIA AS A POTENTIAL AIR FORCE
DANGER TO ISREAL. (TEL AVIV'S A-38).
AKINS

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